



San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

MEDIA RELEASE

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CITY OF SAN DIEGO UNVEILS REVOLUTIONARY CRIME-FIGHTING TOOL

A Prosecutor in Every Neighborhood Solving Crime Problems Before They Get to Court

San Diego, CA (July 19, 2000) -- Imagine having a quality-of-life crime problem in your neighborhood -- drug activity, graffiti, transients -- and being able to pick up the phone or walk to a nearby community center and let your neighborhood prosecutor know. This image is now a reality in the City of San Diego, with the expansion of the City Attorney's Neighborhood Prosecution Unit.

Today, San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn and San Diego Police Chief David Bejarano announced the implementation of a new direction for criminal prosecution in San Diego: Deputy city attorneys assigned to work in our neighborhoods, side-by-side with police officers and community members to proactively solve quality-of-life crime problems. Rather than work in a downtown office far away from the community impacted by crime, the Neighborhood Prosecutors will be present in the communities where the crime occurs. Neighborhood Prosecutors are initially being assigned to work out of the San Diego Police Department's Central and Mid-City Divisions. The Central Division prosecutor will focus on the neighborhoods of Sherman Heights and Grant Hill. The Mid-City Division prosecutor will focus on City Heights West and City Heights East. These Neighborhood Prosecutors will aggressively prosecute cases coming out of these neighborhoods. They will attend community meetings to listen to the concerns of community members. They will develop and implement innovative and creative strategies to prevent crime and educate the public. They will prepare community victim impact statements to take to court so the community's voice is heard in the courtroom.

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"It may seem simple and obvious enough, but this is a major change in the way we do business in the criminal justice system," City Attorney Casey Gwinn explained. "We are moving away from a traditional prosecutorial model that is reactive. We are taking instead a proactive, problem-solving approach. We believe through prevention and education strategies and creative problem-solving, we can resolve crime problems before they get to court. And for those cases that do get to court, we will aggressively prosecute them, ensuring that the community's voice is heard in the process."

The City Attorney's Neighborhood Prosecution initiative is in partnership with the San Diego Police Department and community members. The initiative has already received national recognition with the award of a community prosecution grant of \$150,000 from the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. The City Attorney's Criminal Division prosecutes misdemeanors committed within the City of San Diego. Misdemeanors are crimes that are punishable by up to a year in the county jail.

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